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AUTHOR Tucker, Jan L.
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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the first international conference on the future of education in Russia held in Sochi, Russia, in September of 1991. The focus was on recent efforts that have been made by educators to develop global education in Russian schools. These efforts include a detailed project for the development of global education in Russia and other former Soviet republics which the participants at the Sochi Conference designed and on which they reported. The report argues that global education is important in Russia and other republics because it teaches about the interdependence of world cultures, it increases social and cultural awareness and communication with other cultures, and it transforms and integrates a culture/nation into the world community and from a closed society to an open society. The report concludes that Russian and U.S. educators interested in the development of global education programs have much to learn from each other. (DB)

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GLOBAL EDUCATION COMES TO RUSSIA IN 1991

Jan L. Tucker*

The Sochi Conference on the Reform of Education in Russia

In Sochi, Russia on September 7, 1991, before an audience of 200 educators from East and West, Dr. Eduard Dneprov, Minister of Education of the Russian Federated Republic, opened the first international conference "The Reform of Education in Russia" with this comment:

"There comes a time in life when a decision must be made that will irrevocably define one's past and determine one's future."

The days of late August 1991 were such a time for Russia's democrats. Minister Dneprov believes that education must lead society---and it did. The Russian Ministry of Education was an instrumental part of the successful resistance to the attempted coup d'état.

From the earliest moments of the crisis, the Ministry seized the leadership initiative. It served as a principal center for the distribution of information to the Russian people. In the early hours of Monday morning, August 19th, communiques were sent from the Ministry enjoining Russians throughout the nation to follow only the decrees and orders of the Yeltsin government and to disregard all other instructions, especially those from the self-appointed "Committee of Eight." Letters, pamphlets, fax and radio

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* Jan L. Tucker is Professor of Education and Director, Global Awareness Program, College of Education, Florida International University, Miami, Florida 33199. He participated in the first international conference on "The Reform of Education in Russia," September 6-14, 1991 held in Sochi, Russia on the eastern shore of the Black Sea. The conference was sponsored by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federated Republic and IMTEC, The International Learning Cooperative, Oslo, Norway.

messages to mothers, soldiers, and workers poured out from the Ministry to all points between Leningrad and Vladivostok. During this critical period, the Ministry staff stayed in close contact by fax and telephone with the West in what proved to be a successful attempt to keep the Sochi Conference on its scheduled course.

Tatiana and Elena, two young teachers of English attached to the Ministry, spent tense hours in the Moscow streets protecting the Russian White House from the anticipated attack by army and KGB units. They witnessed the death of three young men who were smashed beneath the treads of armored personnel carriers driven by blinded, frightened soldiers---young men who sympathized with the resistors and who were scared to death they would be ordered to fire on the crowd. Tatiana and Elena themselves were ready to die, but in the exhilaration of the moment did not believe it would happen. From the beginning, the resistors from the Ministry of Education and the Russian White House believed confidently their cause would prevail. The successful coup resistance was a crucible in the development of democracy and this vital spirit permeated the Sochi Conference.

Toni F. Kirkwood, Facilitator, International/Global Education programs in the Dade County (Florida) Public Schools, and this writer were in the USSR for nine days, September 6-15. During that time, communism died in the nation that gave it birth, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics disappeared and the separate Republics gained ascendancy, Leningrad reverted to St. Petersburg, and Presidents Gorbachev and Yeltsin were interviewed and questioned by the American people on ABC television in a live program that was broadcast simultaneously in the USA and the USSR.

The Sochi Conference, the first-ever international conference on the future of education in Russia, proceeded as scheduled. Only two weeks earlier, the very people who planned and conducted the Conference had played vital roles in the defeat of the coup.

It was an extraordinary chapter in the history of Russia and in the history of education in Russia.

Global Education Introduced in Russia

The global spirit of the Sochi Conference appeared in the program introduction:

> Only the progressive integrative process within the educational sphere makes possible integration of our country into the World Community. This is one of the few fields where we can cooperate on a parity basis. Both sides have something new to learn from each other. But the best result will be achieved if we create something new together.

Russian educators first learned about global education when four ranking members of the Russian Ministry of Education attended an international education conference in April 1991 in Key Biscayne, Florida.* The Russian participants were provided with information concerning global education programs in the United States and they visited a high school in Miami's inner city where students demonstrated the use of international computer communications networks as part of their global education program. Upon her return to Russia, Dr. Helen Lenskaia, Senior Researcher, Center for Pedagogical Innovation, a sub-unit of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, and a Counselor to Minister Eduard Dneprov, exerted immediate and strong leadership in the development of global education programs.

During the Sochi Conference in September, Dr. Lenskaia offered the following rationale for global education in Russian schools in her paper "The Idea of Global Education in the Russian Federation Schools."

> During decades the so called "international" education has been widely practiced in Soviet schools. There were Russiacentristic partial

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* The Key Biscayne conference was called "Innovation and Reform in Education: The United States and the Soviet Union." It was sponsored by the Global Awareness Program and the Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship Education, both located at Florida International University; the Institute for the Study of Soviet Education, Indiana University; the Dade County Public Schools; and the Foreign Policy Association.

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textbook descriptions of certain facts from History, Geography, Literature and the Arts of different USSR peoples, together with heavily ideological courses of History and Geography of foreign countries.

Recently the situation began to change. Courses devoted to USSR national languages and cultures [and] World Literature and World History are included into curriculum content. But so far all these changes are lacking a unifying integrative approach. More promising is an attempt to realize the ideas of global education in Russian Federation schools. Unchallengeably urgent to this country are such objectives of global education as developing in students. . . .

1. Understanding the plurality of possible world outlooks.

2. Understanding problems the world civilization faces.

3. Abilities to positively accept other cultures, find commonalties and differences when comparing cultures.

4. Systematic and system thinking.

5. Active involvement in solving problems of community, country, the whole world.[1]

Dr. Lenskaia added:

The causes that stimulated our US colleagues to initiate the global education movement exist in this country as well. Although our economy is not globalized to such extent as the economies of USA and other developed countries are, the tendency to its internationalizations is obvious, together with joining world main political currents, dynamic changing national structure, increasing interactions of nations an cultures within and outside the country. [2]

Dr. Lenskaia described four regions in Russia that have been selected as sites for the first global education programs.

- Schools of Petrosavodsk city, where the Finnish population seeks unification with Finland and the educational needs of small-numbered North ethnoses are not fully met.

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[1] Robert Hanvey, *An Attainable Global Perspective*. Denver, Colorado: Center for the Teaching of International Relations, CTIR, 1976.)

[2] Ken Tye, ed., *Global Education: From Thought to Action*. Alexandria, VA.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. ASCD, 1990.

- Schools of Maikop and Sochi, cities in the South of the country, where their own multiethnic population is being joined now by refugees from neighboring Caucasian Republics.

- Schools of Raizan city in central Russia, where the members of chauvinistic and anti-Semitic organisation, called "Pam'at" (memory), became active.

- Forty-seven (47) schools of Moscow city, where the problems of fulfilling the cultural requirements of many different peoples living in the city (about one million non-Russian) and refugees coming from various parts of the country have become quite acute.

The 200 participants at the Sochi Conference developed 18 proposals for the reform of Russian education for the consideration by the Ministry of Education for possible financial support. Each proposal was presented to the conference participants in plenary session in order to ascertain interest in further planning at the Conference on a detailed, long-range project. Global education was one of the 18 proposals.

Helen Lenskaia (Russia) and Toni F. Kirkwood (USA) became co-leaders of the Global Education project and were joined by 20 other participants (including the writer) representing the Baltic nations, Ukraine, Russia, and the United States, along with delegates from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. This working group discussed and designed a detailed project for the development of global education programs in Russia and other Soviet Republics.

The final Sochi Conference report on global education argued that global education is important in Russia and other Republics because it . . . . .

* *teaches* about the interdependence of world cultures.

* *increases* social and cultural awareness and communication with other cultures.

* *transforms* and *integrates* a culture/nation into the world community and from a closed society to an open society.

* *provides* an opportunity to study one's own culture in the light of other world cultures.

* *provides* a humanistic (and interdisciplinary) approach to education.

* *provides* a way of structuring the core curriculum.

* *assists* in the development of a project culture (including separate national identities and across national borders).

* *aids* in the development of a problems/issues approach.

* *increases* the possibility to integrate critical thinking skills into an integrated curriculum.

The goals of the global education projects in Russia are to . . . .

* *develop* and *implement* a shared philosophy of education.

* *develop* and *implement* a global curriculum and model school programs, ages 4-16.

* *implement* thinking skills within the framework of the curriculum and school programs.

* *facilitate* a cross cultural analysis of the efficiency of the programs.

* *develop* and *implement* textbooks, teaching materials, resources, print and non-print.

* *initiate* cross cultural research on the philosophy of global education programs.

* *develop* and *implement* models of school change.

* *create* a network of global schools and an effective system of communication among them.

* *train* trainers, teachers, and administrators to implement the global curriculum.

Educational Reform in Russia and Global Education

The Sochi Conference showcased a very talented and dedicated group of educators who are directly and indirectly associated with the Ministry of Education of the Russian Republic. Minister Dneprov has drawn together a superb group who are energetically committed to reforming education in Russia on an accelerated agenda in order to deal with the enormous problems now facing that nation. Russian educators are well-grounded in theory and pedagogy with a deep sense of commitment to the profession. After a long period of isolation from the international community they are eager to learn and have much to offer. The Russian Ministry of Education is pragmatic and seeks experience and "know how" in the West. This need for solutions created the Sochi Conference and kept it on course in the midst of what some Russian commentators have called their most severe political crisis since the Revolution in 1917.

The United States has a special opportunity to assist in this process because we have a similar national profile. The two nations share many characteristics: a geography of continental proportions; a population of many cultures and nationalities; and a challenge to integrate our economies and cultures into the world community of nations in the post Cold War era. In effect, the United States is perceived by Russian educators as a laboratory of development and change. Global education has been received by them as an idea with much potential to meet their needs---as an approach to education that will help build a bridge between their authoritarian past and the more democratic and open society of their future; and as an approach that will help to break down their isolation of the 20th century and enable them to participate more fully in the interdependent world of the 21st century. In turn, we can learn much from them.

The Sochi Conference will be followed with a conference "Multicultural Understanding Through Global Education: The Russian and American Experiences" to be

held in Russia in April 1992 that will focus on three areas: the philosophy of global education/multicultural education in Russian and American contexts; teacher training; and curriculum development. Schools at the middle level (ages 10-14) in Russia and the United States will be paired for purposes of curriculum development. Another conference is planned in Miami in April 1993 that will focus on the training of teacher trainers. And preliminary plans are being made for a summer camp for Russian and American students from the pilot schools in July 1993.

We may ponder why national educational policy in Russia and the United States is taking different directions in the face of very similar national challenges. Russia is simultaneously seeking integration into the global community and domestically following the path of decentralization, countering decades of the "russification" of minorities. In the United States the national government appears to be attempting to centralize the curriculum with arguments that call for "American cultural literacy" and reflect an aversion to multicultural education. At the same time our national government demonstrates little interest in an education designed to integrate the United States into a changing world.

The spirit of the Sochi Conference was that we have something to learn from each other and in that journey we may create something new together. The joint development of global education programs is a step in that direction.